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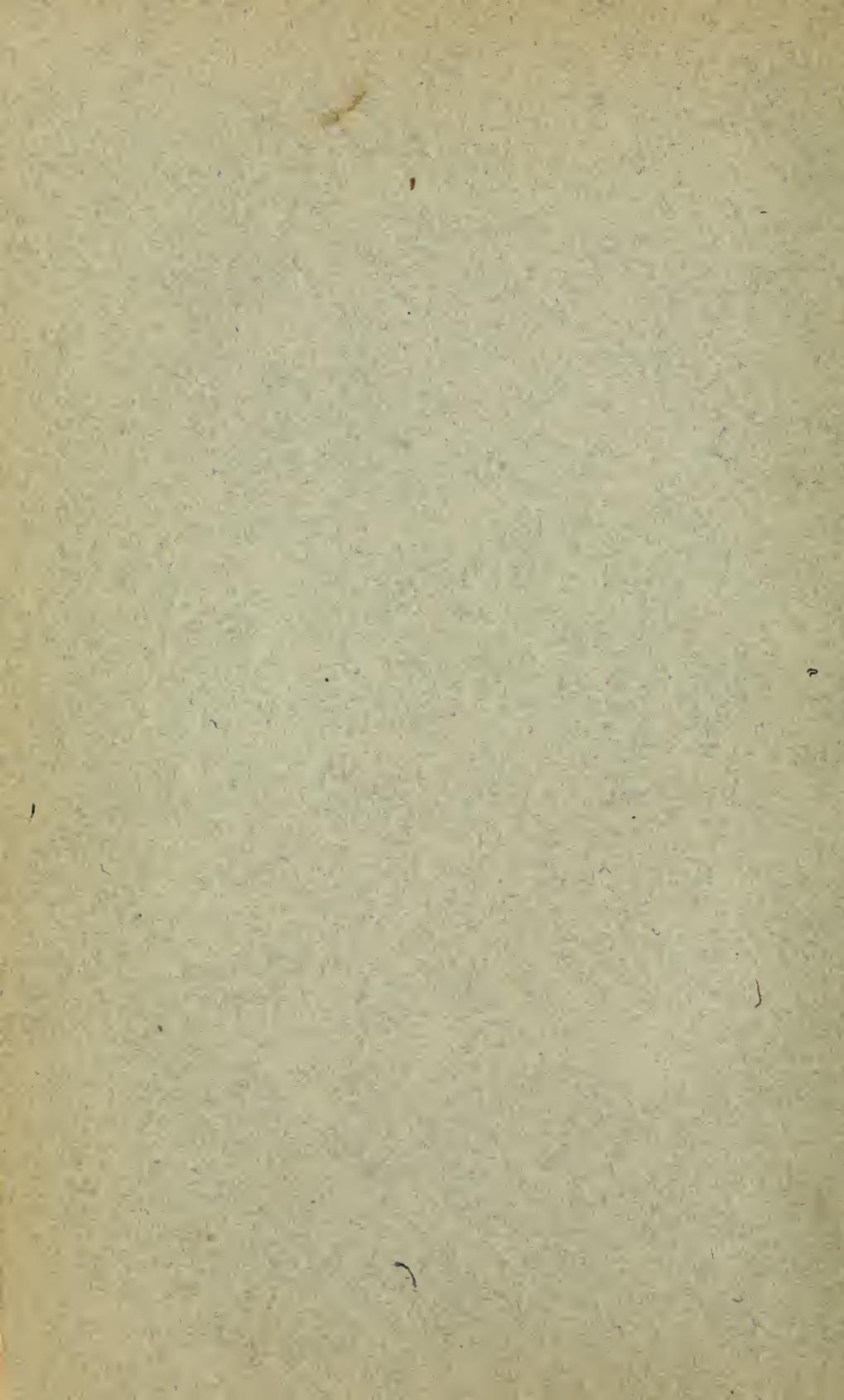
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



The Siren.



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The Siren.

Bauer *Minature*

"He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her."

St. John VIII, 7.



SAN FRANCISCO,
1876.

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To ALL

WHO LOVE AND PRACTICE

TRUTH AND PURITY,

AND HATE AND ESCHEW

FALSEHOOD AND HYPOCRISY,

THIS POEM

IS CORDIALLY AND RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

ESSENTIAL.

It is my duty to guard the reader against any misapprehension of the resemblance to a certain eminent divine, which some may trace in one of the principal figures of this poem. I admit that the bright side of the character was suggested by that most eloquent, fearless, effective and devoted champion of religion, truth, progress and his country; but its dark side, or that which by the testimony of another is made to seem dark, bears no resemblance to him at all in sentiment, manner or incident. Its aspect of real or imputed guilt is indeed as opposite to him in spirit, experience, fact and lineament, as heaven is diverse from the eternal home of the lost. The figure is, however, not so much a creation of my own imagination as it is the embodiment of a phantasy that has long filled the public mind, in which the divine attributes are those of the greatest preacher of the age, but the Satanic, the product of the false coloring in which his enemies, persecutors and slanderers have so lavishly indulged. The strange combination forms a stupendous monster, which, in bold contrast of light and shade, infinitely transcends Milton's archangelic outcast hero, and is so well adapted to epic poetry that I could not resist the temptation to attempt its delineation in verse.

The brief sketch of another figure introduced may also be taken to represent an actual personage, whom it does not however at all portray, for even the defendant in the memorable trial which established the innocence of the accused and cleared his immortal reputation from stain, will, I think, justify my belief that the plaintiff, the party in question, although possessed of brilliant talents and eccentric genius, is at once too immethodical, self-respecting and upright to deliberately concoct an evil conspiracy, and that, in making his suicidal assault upon his warmest friend and greatest benefactor, he was impelled by a mania or hallucination of

which he was unfortunately the victim, and which, for baselessness and obstinacy has a striking parallel in that of *Leontis*, in Shakespeare's WINTER'S TALE. But hallucination is not confined to him. How far it is carried and how sincerely it is believed, none but they who are familiar with extreme cases can have any adequate idea. The poem illustrates this subject and will thus throw light on the mystery which has often embarrassed and misled the public judgment.

Still more important is the truth which is gradually gaining ground, that no one is so well prepared to resist and subdue temptation as he who already knows the full extent of its most attractive and sensual delusions. I have, for this reason, long believed that a poem, presenting, in the first place, the utmost possible attractions of the charms of sense, and giving, in the second, the reverse of the picture, the agonizing and interminable remorse, the utter hopelessness and complete prostration which are the rank and terrible consequences of sinful sensual indulgence, would be more conducive to our strength to withstand and dissolve the spells of evil than many thousand sermons. For

“ Ignorance is the curse of God;
Knowledge the wing with which we fly to heaven.”

I have long tried to compose and complete this poem, but not until the events transpired which have fixed the attention of mankind upon the subject, have I felt myself able to impart to it a vital interest likely to render its lessons readable and impressive. Shallow and timid moralists will, perhaps, question the expediency of my course, but the most enlightened and eminent members of the medical, legal and clerical professions, whose opportunities of observation and of forming a judgment, enable them to draw intelligent and just conclusions on matters of this kind, will, I am assured, justify the intention and approve the tendency of my essay.

THE AUTHOR.

THE HINT.

What is the terror of our race?
What do our best and bravest flee?
From what do all avert their face,
And almost turn to stone to see?
Although more harmless than the dead,
Than Death himself more shunned by far,
What is this Gorgon?—'Tis the dread
Of seeming what we really are.
Be what they may, men always plot
To seem the thing that they are not,
And from themselves to hide themselves
No mole beneath more darkly delves:
Even to God, who hears their prayer,
They mask themselves with pious air,
Nor frankly stand upon their level
To saint or sinner save—the devil:
Him to deceive no mortal weens—
He is too much behind the scenes,
And mirrors faithfully to pride
The truth man lives and dies to hide.

II.

Preachers draw Virtue passing fair,
And Sin with such abhorrent air
That novices, by looks misled,
The showy wanton woo and wed;
For in the proof we find that Sin
At first has greater charms to win
Each glowing sense a thousand fold
Than Virtue, pure, austere and cold:

Sin smiling comes, with open arms,
 To make youth scorn the sage alarms
 Precept instills, for she appears
 Just opposite to all his fears—
 So jovial, genial, happy, free,
 Born but for sweetness, like the bee.
 What wonder mortals unprepared
 Are by her witchery ensnared,
 Or that her veriest dupes and tools
 Are these same learned rev'rend fools.
 Who cannot see in SENSE the rod
 That rules the world in spite of God,
 Whose spell creates desire and starts
 Its flood of fire through human hearts,
 And wakens even sin's affright
 At passion's leap and torrent might!

III.

Oh, why not draw the picture true,
 Give flesh and sensuousness their due,
 And let the novice know the most
 That sense and sin and Satan boast,
 All their enticements fairly tell—
 The secret of their charms dispel—
 And from their baits the honey wring
 To show their cost and curse and sting?

IV.

The enemy to underrate
 Still proves the fall of man and state,
 Who knows where Sin's enchantment lies
 She cannot capture by surprise:
 Ever through ignorance the maid
 And ne'er through knowledge is betrayed:
 For there is not a worse defense
 Than blind and simple ignorance,
 Nor adamantine panoply,
 Save knowledge for her chastity.

V.

The innocence of angels flows
From wisdom boundless as their days,
Which hell's horrific secrets knows
And heaven's lore of love and praise;
Such innocence, alone secure
Through all temptation to endure,
I make to guileless souls a tower
Which mocks both Sin and Satan's power.
This is the moral of my tale;
Against its seathing truth
And saint-defying ruth
The gates of hell shall not prevail.

THE SIREN.

PART FIRST.

AGLAOPHEME.

—:o:—

I.

He met her in the dark'ning street,
 He caught the kindling look she cast,
And heard her siren lips repeat
 Two words of music as she passed :
The tone was feigned and false the smile,
 In venal mockery of love,
Intent as Satan to beguile,
 And still seem harmless as the dove :
And though he must have known as much—
 At least he must have known that such
As vend their love at venal rate—
 Hide something in it worse than hate—
Despite his knowledge and the voice
 Of conscience firm against his choice,
The tone and glance shot through his frame,
 And slew his virtue and his shame.
He paused—turned back : he felt abased
 Beneath the wretch whose want or waste
Bartered her earthly, heavenly worth
 For tinsel trash and glittering earth.
The agony of something good
 Dying within him, chafed his mood :
Passion burned hotter for the check :
 The reins dropped o'er its flaming neck,
And straight it took the road to hell
 Which none but Satan knew as well.

II.

The form that glided on before
 Elastically as angels tread
 The cloudy path to heaven's door—
 Although, alas ! it elsewhere led--
 Seemed lighter than a happy thought,
 Fairer than lover fancies aught
 Where all is fair, and softer much
 Than infant's kiss or zephyr's touch :
 Though clad in tasteful modest guise,
 Through all the round voluptuous rise
 Of beauty bragged of that concealed
 More proudly than of aught revealed:
 But, oh ! a nameless something—more
 Than words can render—hovered o'er
 Each gesture and around the whole—
 An atmosphere—a sense the soul
 Gives forth when beautiful or great,
 Though fallen from its high estate,
 Which tells, despite its moral death
 What once it was and whence its breath.

III.

She knew the victim who had swallowed
 Her smiling bait and hook,
 Like an enchanted captive followed,
 But did not turn to look,
 Or slacken aught her even pace
 Till he had won his needless race;
 Nor even then her face would turn
 But with a listless unconcern,
 As though her husband or her brother
 Proffered the arm on which the bland
 Touch of her almost baby hand
 Rested as she raised the other,
 And drew the veil her features o'er,
 But not to hide the blush they wore ;

For shame was dead and could not rise
 In sweet confusion to her eyes,
 To act a wilful babbler's part
 And show the color of her heart.

IV.

Together from the crowded street
 The guilty pair have turned aside
 Where closer, murkier shadows meet,
 And, like the wings of Satan, hide
 The ugly bargaining of lust
 From scornful light and the disgust
 The vilest feel when it displays
 Their evils naked to their gaze:
 For sin is that old basilisk
 Who strikes the gazer dread,
 But if a steadfast look she risk
 At self—she too is sped

* * * *

Low was the tone as for his own
 And not another's ear,
 And yet to her has surely flown—
 Who started as in fear—
 In fear? Oh no! that bursting glance
 Which spread the pupil, was the dance
 Of joy and filled her vacant trance
 As lightning darkness with its light,
 But sank as soon in second night.
 A calm gay tone to his replied
 Which laughed sincerely when it sighed—
 “Pardon, dear youth, my foolish start:
 Sure I did think that man or devil
 Could never more have made this heart
 Beat quicker at the thought of evil:
 But lewdness wild this—’tis more
 Than I could ever dream before!
 I thought myself the tempter here,

But find I am the victim still
 Yet wert thou e'en the Prince of Ill,
 Thou shouldst not see me blanched with fear
 Or vanquished by thy wanton skill
 To beggar Nature's depths to fish
 The spiciest dainty from her dish
 And kill with sweetest poison every wish.

* * * *

* * * *

Still let me hold that doubt as dear
 That all this murkiness will clear,
 And leave our minds a spotless page
 On which to trace a pilgrimage
 To that fair altar, Heaven-designed,
 The sweetest e'er in flesh enshrined,
 At which the guiltiest, kneeling, pause.
 This then is thy conceit: Because
 I gave my love in vain, I must
 Remunerate myself with lust,
 And ever eat the serpent's dust—
 That shame, like mine, in no recess
 Can hide but utter shamelessness—
 That heaven cannot still my care
 So well and surely as despair.

* * * *

* * * *

*

V

“ But this is preaching—say, amen !
 For, lo ! the lioness's den
 Now frowns upon you—at my touch
 It yawns—but all is darkness—clutch
 My hand—Oh, that you should have sought her
 Who leads you, like a lamb, to slaughter,
 Nor know no morsel would reveal
 You had but made her evening meal.”

VI.

Another door was opened now,
 Which let upon the thorough gloom,
 A sudden, full and dazzling glow,
 As if the light had burst the room.
 Both raised their hands against the blaze,
 Which fell upon the orbs of sight,
 And back one started in amaze
 At all discovered by the light:—
 A chamber high as palace halls,
 And gorgeous as their pageantry,
 With master pieces thronged like walls
 Erected to some deity,
 (When grace to man was bought and sold
 As harlot's love, with gifts and gold,)
 All wildly beaming,
 As fairy's dreaming
 Shone there before him palpably:
 The softness of the houri's home
 In perfume rose from floor to dome
 And caught the senses daintily:
 The painter had with colors warm
 Given to all a loving grace;
 The sculptor too, in every form,
 Had breathed a longing to embrace:
 And velvet couches ready stood
 To welcome any tender pair
 With softness yeilding as the mood
 Of such as wished to nestle there.
 But what were these—or what were they,
 The lightest gossamers that play
 Upon the air—the softest down
 That on a cygnet yet hath grown—
 The bosom of a lover meeting
 A lover's in a dream—the doves
 Of Venus in alarm retreating
 For shelter to her breast—the loves
 Of nymphs and naiads—things too tender

To bear the day's ungentle splendor—
 The maiden's longing for a kiss,
 She coys withal—the lap of bliss—
 All, all besides, to senses kind,
 Which makes delight delight to wed,
 Naught, naught to all that liere combined
 That Sin might find
 Her heaven in a wanton's bed.

VII.

She found it not—oh, no ! be sure
 She dare not stain those vestal sheets
 With even love's tumultuous sweets,
 For angels kept their whiteness pure—
 Pure as thy thoughts,—Oh, censor stern !
 Which beauty never taught to burn :
 The tree of life—eternal bliss
 Had not more jealous guard than this
 At which vice only shot to miss.
 Voluptuous, fragrant, heaving, soft,
 It promised (promise kept too oft!)
 That limbs of royal daintiness,
 Rounded exquisitely and glowing
 Like light, and fair as snow while snowing,
 Whose look or touch would more than bless,
 Should slumber or should revel there
 In ecstasy of fond excess,
 More melting than the dews,
 Than sweetness sweeter, deeper than despair,
 But not in wickedness ? Oh, no ! in prayer,
 The only might which God subdues.

VIII.

For he espied a strange illusion
 Which shamed this sensuous profusion:
 Dim-curtained in the farthest nook,
 And solemn as the Holy Book,

An alter rose serene.
 Was it but painting? was it real?
 It seemed to set a hallowed seal
 On that luxurious scene,
 And say—"So far the wild waves flow
 But never, never farther go!"
 For by that Saviour-bearing rood.—
 And martyred love on high,
 The ice of chasteness through the blood
 Here strikes the panting soul with awe,
 Bows both the haughty heart and knee
 To that incarnate mystery,
 Makes meek the will to sacred law,
 And all but pureness die.

IX.

"Though art afraid; but 'tis too late:
 Come, be a man, and brave thy fate;
 Enter!" she cried, and from her hand
 A push fulfilled her own command,
 The swelling carpet sank as mute
 As moss beneath a fairy's foot:
 Albeit he stumbled in and fell,
 There had been naught at all
 To sing his fall,
 Except the sighing of a lute
 Against the wall—
 But for the laughter
 Ringing thereafter
 As sweet and musical,
 And also his that pealed as well.

X.

"Pardon," she cried, "my hasty motion!
 It had been well to stoop with grace,
 And make a show of some devotion
 On entering this holy place,

But you have capped the pious notion
 By falling flat upon your face.
 You might have waited—What! no bones
 Broken, I hope? a pile of stones,
 Instead of pile like this, had taught
 You better far that where you ought
 To go you were not going when
 You fell, but 'tis the way with men—
 All warning's treated with a smile
 Till naught is left worth warning's while.

XI.

“ How you stare ! what you see is earth,
 Not air—'tis bought and paid for too
 With more than it was ever worth;
 And yet it does not cheat your view
 In cost or value: 'tis the price
 My soul and body brought—nay, more,
 My God and God's own paradise
 For this I sold, and for the vice,
 License and rapture of—deplore
 I still the impious sacrifice?

XII.

“ What I have gained I richly merit,
 Who was as an unthrifty heir,
 Without the patience to inherit,
 But must enjoy it then and there.
 My heavenly patrimony cost
 The devel but a paltry sum :
 For present pleasure I have lost
 My title to all bliss to come:
 I could not wait that distant day,
 While my young heart was wildly burning
 For love or joy which might allay
 Its inextinguishable yearning
 An instant ; for, however brief,

To such a heart as mine I say
Relief is still a blest relief.

For I must love and lavish love;
I must caress and be caressed;

My heart must to another's move;
My lips be to another's pressed;
And all my life an others wed—
Or I am like a thing that's dead—
A body with so dull a soul
As would not scare a hungry goul.

XII.

“ What shall she do, of joys bereft,
Whose hope and hold on high are cleft,
When yet the sweetest joy is left ?
As heaven cannot be her store,
Were she not fool than ever more
If she for conscience aught forbore.
The tempter asks why aught is hidden,
Why what is sweetest is forbidden,
Unless to add a secret zest
And make the lover doubly blest.
The lost demands with reckless glee—
(This is my darling heresy)—
Were it not wise my soul to steep
As deep in joy as hell is deep,
And give my life in every kiss,
And did a thousand times of bliss—
The God of love in act adore,
Although cast off forevermore ?
Who says I shall have vainly striven ?
Who loves so much should be forgiven,
For Heaven is love, and though they roam,
At last she takes her children home.

XIII.

“ What light is sparkling in thine eyes ?
What trembles to thy fingers' tips.

Why does thy breathing turn to sighs,
 And color change on cheek and lips ?
 Impatient pilgrim dost thou see
 At last enshrined thy deitys
 Here is his mystery confessed,
 In Nature's mutual overflow
 Of worship in her holiest nest,—
 Her Maker's inmost shrine below ?
 Can passion thus with worship blend,
 And thus thy bosom rapture rend,
 Before thy holy journey's end ?
 A fire is in thy veins—a fire
 Which in love's billows will expire.
 Oh, what a curse it is that this
 Should be as transient as a kiss!
 Why let it not outlast the sun,
 When souls unite and two are one ?

XIV.

Thou know'st me not—this sable veil
 Shadows my face like twilight gloom,
 Nor canst thou tell if here prevail
 The tints of art or nature's bloom;
 Nor will I hint—but in our play,
 Kiss, if thou canst, those tints away,
 Then nearer come and nearer still—
 If less of life my glances fill,
 Or if they vary less their fire
 From languishment to keen desire,—
 From total absence of control,
 When body, mind and heart and soul
 Are given over to delight,
 Still clinging with their utmost might
 To that unutterably dear
 Which near they draw—ah! yet more near—
 As hermit in ecstatic prayer,
 Brings heaven down and clasps it there :—
 If to thy close and prying sight,

One speck distains the red and white
 Spread on my cheeks by Him above,
 Or say by nature, health and love—
 If pales the ruby of my lip
 When thou shalt press and thou shalt sip,
 Or fails the sweetness of its dew,
 Or love-sick fragrance sighing through—
 If on the brink of wanton waste,
 I keep not pure and fresh and chaste,
 Then make my wishes void and vain,
 And spurn me from thee with disdain.

XV.

“But, ah ! thou sayest we have need
 Of nothing more than nature’s dress
 And bed of down, to do this deed,—
 To celebrate this ancient rite,
 To prove both faith and virtue’s might,
 So sacred with the Adamite,—
 Misdeemed enchanting wickedness—
 That we must render back to art
 All, all she gave to hide our shame,
 Meet flesh to flesh and heart to heart,
 Like those whom God alone can part
 Whose spirits hunger—thirst to bless—
 Give all they can and take the same,
 Yet shrink from grossness, guilt or blame.
 What ! no reserve ? all, all, to you ?
 And what I have you know not yet—
 Limbs as symmetrically true
 As culling sculptor ever met;
 Smooth and white as his marble, too—
 With the highest polish on it set,
 And through their whiteness shining full,
 Life soft and springing to the touch,
 And every motion musical,
 And—and—but I have said too much—
 And yet to stint the praises due
 To him who made them were but pelf;

I hardly marked them as they grew,
 And claim no merit for myself:
 I do not speak of them to thee
 From idleness or vanity,
 But that the flame with which I burn,
 May meet as ardent in return,—
 In prayer's seraphic rivalry.

XVI.

These hands of mine will dare to grasp—
 Yet tenderly—thy manly form—
 These arms of roundness, they will clasp
 Thee where my heart and love are warm :
 Ah ! to my bosom—there were swelling
 With pride to find it all his own,
 Young Love hath made his loveliest dwelling,
 And built his panting, double throne
 Of glowing snow :—each little hill
 Sweet milk and full affection fill
 To perfect roundness ; and each head
 From love's own lips is tinted red,
 And 'tis, I ween,
 To lie between
 Man's softest, sweetest bed.
 Ah ! there awhile delighted rest,
 And own thyself completely blest !
 But ere thou sin, let both be dead :
 Albeit there a stranger guest,
 As infant on fond mother's breast,
 Be thou of only innocence possessed.

XVII.

“ All words are meagre, dry and dull
 That strive to speak unspeakable
 Delight—delight too dear and deep—
 Too maddeningly full—
 Too wild and exquisitely thrilling—

Too lost to all—too sweetly killing
 To thought or care of time and earth—
 Too near the core aught to behoove
 But the glad pulses' quiv'ring leap,
 The heart's deep throbbing mirth,
 Soul-wasting rapture and the love
 O'er gushing with all-joyous sweep,
 So eager with its quickened breath,
 All, all to give and naught to keep—
 Give ever, though to challenge Death
 And sleep his endless sleep!

XVIII.

"That two can clasp and wholly touch,
 Like twins ere birth or guile is known,
 With pressure sweet as Venus' zone,
 And in love's gentleness and might,
 Hallowed by God's own nuptial right,
 Feel so kind and give so much—
 Delighted be to give delight
 And almost feel their souls unite,
 But ne'er so close together get—
 While rising to the Infinite,
 Where love with bliss is ever lit,
 Not e'er to struggle closer yet
 To that perfection he hath set,
 As rapture's goal
 To every soul :
 That on her part she can resign
 What was more sacred than a shrine
 To which e'en thought durst not refer—
 More than inviolate to her—
 That she so melted by her love—
 So lost to all below, above—
 Save him alone, her all can lavish,
 Holily kept for him to ravish,
 And of her treasure all bereft,
 Can love him better for the theft,

Predestined but to woo the fate
 Her gentle senses deprecate,
 And nightly delicacy kill,
 That whom she loves may take his fill,
 Making her tenderness his pillow,
 Her murmured modesty as well,
 Her passion swelling like a billow,
 Whose depths no reckoning can tell ;
 Feeling—ah, yes, a secret gladness
 That what she loved to hide and cherish,
 Her lover revels in to madness,
 And would so still, though she should perish ;
 Yet purer grow in love and trust
 Till all is angel, even dust :
 If there is joy or sweet in life—
 Hope, heaven for man—then call it wife.
 That this—all this can be so true,
 Within the reach of each of you—
 Of all the blessings God hath given,
 It is the sweetest out of Heaven—
 Of all his miracles below,
 The strangest, greatest that I know. .

XIX.

“ So vast is love and so divine !
 Can thine be such ? And such be mine ?
 One moment—yes, one moment o'er,
 And love to learn has little more !
 For like a martyr at the stake
 Who sees the Heavens o'er him break
 And angels coming down,
 Breathless suspense will clasp its own—
 And with excess of rapture groan—
 And every nerve vibrate with glee,
 Like the harp-string's sweet ecstasy,
 To reap bliss God hath sown.

XX.

“ Perchance—nay, certain ’tis perdition,
 Yet as the lost are nought but free
 To challenge every penalty,
 Then so much dearer still to me ;
 Since thou desirest no partition
 May sever me from thee—
 While thou, yon marble bath within,
 Divestest with the haste to sin,
 Yet not to sin, but let love’s heat
 Dissolve thy life in worship meet,
 I to the other I will repair,
 Forgetting ’tis not Eden there,
 Shy nature of her screen bereave,
 And make myself another Eve,
 To tempt another Adam, too,
 With fruit as sweet as that which grew
 By Jove’s permission to entice
 Mankind to forfeit paradise,
 Yet not to lose, but for us twain
 A sweeter paradise regain.”

XXI.

She said, and waved her little glove,
 Looking half mischief and half love,
 And disappeared. The gilded door
 Closed softly, and for ever more
 He feared—and tried to open, but,
 Firm as a rock, he found it shut.
 He paused—he listened—he retired,
 And did as he had been desired.
 Back he came into the hall—
 Lo ! a figure strong and tall,
 Amidst a blaze of light,
 Stood against the dazzling wall.
 It stared at him,
 As though he were a spright,

And yet betrayed no fear ;
 Naked it was—more wild than grim,
 Without a stain—without a flaw—
 Of mighty chest—of giant limb—
 He looked, but in a mirror clear—
 It was himself he saw.

XXII.

At length he knocked and called at last,
 But all was still as death
 Which many ages have o'erpast,
 Sleeping in some desert night,
 Except his own thick breath.
 He schooled himself as best he might;
 He waited long and deemed it longer,
 As his impatience grew the stronger.

XXIII.

Oh, when—when will that sturdy door,
 Upon its silent hinges turning,
 To his fierce eagerness give o'er
 That naked form with blushes burning ;
 With every charm about it thronging
 To satisfy and kindle longing,
 Now dearer to his wishes even
 Than entrance would be into Heaven ?

XXIV.

Upon a couch his length he cast—
 Buried his head within his hands—
 Like water shaken by the blast,
 Or rippling ocean on the sands,
 Course after course convulsion took,
 And to his very centre shook.

XXV.

Lost save to hearing so intense,
 What was that fairy din ?
 As suddenly he turned about
 As though it were a battle-shout ;
 And there—how came she there ? She stood,
 Too beautiful for flesh and blood,
 Upon a dais for a shrine,
 And to a pagan's sense,
 Had seemed a presence so divine
 That not to kneel were sin.

XXVI.

A veil of shining silk in part
 The beauty of her face concealed,
 The rest was naked as the heart
 Of man is to his God revealed ;
 And beautiful ! and there was not
 In her complexion shade or spot
 To mar its perfect white, or dim
 The lustre of each graceful limb :
 Nor was there where from head to heel
 Perfection had not set his seal ;
 Full, bright, transparent, soft and pure,
 And swelling to each curvature,
 Like young affection ere the dulness
 Of earthly chillings checks its fulness.

XXVII.

Her sloping neck in clusters bore
 Her golden hair—all brightly curling
 Like folded light—here closely furling
 Shy-infant curls—and there like ore
 Or virgin gold, in wreaths they fell,
 Heavy and thick, and twisted like a spell.

XXVIII.

So sweetly moved her lovely head
 Upon her graceful neck,
 That every turn some beauty bred
 Which grace before had never shed,
 The fittest yet to deck !
 And still a dangerous commotion,
 More dangerous than the stormiest sea,
 Within her bosom seemed to be--
 The billows of love's little ocean
 Were heaving high and heavenly--
 The soul of softness made his lair,
 And love-sick rapture rested there ;
 And had the sternest man surveyed,
 Soft as an infant he had felt--
 The holiest saint that ever prayed
 Like wax had found his virtue melt.

XXIX.

Her rounded leg of perfect mold,
 Outlined so delicately bold,
 Still curving full to fullest round
 And taper exquisite to bound
 Of slimness next the tiny feet,
 White as lilies and as sweet.

XXX.

Her arms, like drifts of snow, disposing
 Themselves with such a languid grace,
 Round as a serpent, and enclosing
 As fatally in their embrace :
 (For violence, howe'er refined
 But kills the body not the mind,
 While luxury with silken thrall,
 Drags down the body, soul and all :)
 They seemed but made to gently press

Heart to heart with dear caress
 Till both be but a mutual heart
 Henceforth unfit to beat apart :

Their yielding compass, velvet palm
 With dreamy contact light and fond
 (Though soft as that celestial balm
 Which sinks like dew the spirit o'er,
 That just hath 'scaped the burning stake,
 Which it endured for Jesus' sake,
 And breathless stands it God before)—
 Held love to love with strength beyond
 The might of death's eternal bond.

XXXI.

With eager hands, lest she should vanish—
 Not as before, but ever banish
 Herself from him—and trembling pace
 The youth advanced—from off her face
 She tore her veil, and he beheld
 Charms on earth unparalleled.

XXXII.

Like Eden's lightning flashed her eyes,
 Large, tender and more fathomless
 And blue than ever were its skies :
 Oh, they could blast and they could bless,
 In anger or in love, as light
 From sun and cloud can bless and blight:
 The dawning day of mildest Spring--
 The long-drawn close of evening--
 The fairest star that shines aloft
 At home enthroned in ether blue—
 The rays that weave the lilies hue--
 The mellowest beam that ever flew--
 Ne'er shone more tender, pure and soft,
 More mildly burned or told so oft
 Or so profoundly of the feeling

Unfathomable—still revealing
 The fountain's infinite supply
 Of love that would not, could not die :
 Still freshly pure and more and more
 And ever kindlier than before—
 As if its everlasting play
 Swept all the lees of love away,
 Or better yet, as if the flood
 Rose high and higher still to God.

XXXIII.

Fair, broad and high, her forehead rose,
 And arched and dark her eyebrows were ;
 The Grecian strictness of her nose,
 And chin, and lips, had given an air
 Of formal calmness to her features,
 But that each passion which bestirs
 The hearts and minds of human creatures,
 In turn looked from that face of hers,
 The color to her cheek that stole
 Was like the spirit of a rose--
 Was not the hue mere health bestows,
 Which with it fades and with it glows,
 But was the fervor of her spright
 Swelling, rising into light,
 The roseate of her soul.

XXXIV.

Her lips were of the rubiest red—
 Much softer they than Cupid's bed
 And lovelier than his bow--
 Pouting in their lusciousness,
 Half she wished their sweetness dead,
 Kissing never rendered less
 But gave more honeyed flow :
 For who had tasted, till she flung
 Them backward, like an infant clung ;

For still their sweetness sweeter grew,
 As if life's nectar flowed thereto--
 At every pressure, fresher, dearer,
 And to the heart vibrating nearer.

XXXV.

A sudden smile of witchery
 From lips, and eyes, and dimpled cheek,
 Looked with the light of gayety,
 By far too full of joy to speak,
 As if Delight had broke her chain,
 And was the queen of earth again,
 And over all should ever reign.

XXXVI.

Exultingly beneath that look,
 Albeit not a whit dissembled,
 Revenge, like rousing adder, shook,
 And even if its rapture trembled.
 That smile is gone and as it fled
 Hah ! what a look grows there instead !
 He started--for he knew her well.
 Oh ! how his fearful visage fell,
 As he stood there, transfixed and blank,
 While heart and soul like water sank ;
 Her sneer all witheringly curled
 With pity wholly pitiless,
 And from her eyes a bolt was hurled,
 Which, had it crushed,
 Had but relieved the keen distress
 Of shame which redly rushed
 And painfully his forehead o'er,
 Then cast him pale upon the floor.

XXXVII.

No warrior o'er his prostrate foe,
 Not Michael binding him below,

Not Satan's self, should he obtain
O'er heaven wide the right to reign,
Could so triumphant or so high--
Oppressed by either roof or sky--
Look as she did, that naked wretch
 In awful loveliness of form,
Whose arms for lightning seemed to stretch
 To crush him like a worm !
Joy, scorn, revenge and madness rung
In every accent of her tongue,
 Like music in a storm.

THE SAINT.

PART SECOND.

I.

“ Oh saint ! oh saint of saints!” she cried
 “ Of whom the godly were so vain--
Say, are you fallen from your pride
 Or only at your prayers again?
Be not ashamed—if saint can be
 Ashamed—of what you wished to do ;
No member of your church can see
 These walls of ancient thickness through ;
And if he could, he might in turn,
 Tell what you will be glad to learn--
Besides your saintship, hither creep
 The very shepherds of the sheep.
Be not dismayed, for I can tell
 You how to cheat both heaven and hell :
They taught me how, these holy men,
 For man must sin and sin again,
Lest growing righteous over-much,
 His Babel’s top the heavens touch—
Lest rival holiness in him,
 E’en the atonement’s glory dim.

II.

“ May I not preach? who can so well
The way of sin and sinners tell?
So well indeed that I suspect
I must be one of the elect:
Though ever guilty of abuse,
I never wanted an excuse—

Or motive harmless as sweet day,
 Or scripture pointing any way ;
 Or if I did, I did not want,
 To make it good, a world of cant.

III.

“ What! you a saint and lack the skill
 To cheat the very prince of ill?
 To be by him and weakness tempted
 Until his longest purse be emptied,
 And then repent? a saint ! and lack
 The wit to prove that white is black
 And black is white ? that here you came
 To lecture me upon my shame,
 Or to discover at the worst,
 It was predestined from the first !
 Though each should be a different story,
 All work together for your glory.

IV.

“ All this and more get up and say—
 Kneel not to flesh and blood I pray !
 To flesh and blood from which a saint
 Once turned away in holy scorn,
 Though then they were without the taint
 Which to my very soul hath worn.
 Oh God ! 'tis strange, most strange ! that thou
 Who spurn'dst me then, shouldst seek me now !
 Me whom thou couldst not e'en endure
 When guileless, guiltless, fresh and pure
 As is the rose bud ere it heaves
 Its crimson crest beyond the leaves
 Of verdant coolness light to seek,
 Or snow upon the highest peak
 Which almost kisses heaven's cheek :
 As if I needed not a grace
 Of mind, complexion, figure, face,

But only that I now possess—
 A laughing devil,
 The fulsome charm of sinfulness
 Delirious with daily revel.

V.

“ I loved you once—adored—I deemed
 You were all angel as you seemed:
 I went to worship it is true,
 Though not my God, alas! but you ;
 And were all candidly confessed,
 I should but count among the rest :
 For age and wisdom owned your worth,
 And as a pattern gave you forth,
 To guide us, like a star, above—
 It could not be a sin to love,
 Yet I hung backward in that press
 Of many a fond idolatress.

VI.

“ Pious, yet manly was the grace
 With which you took your wonted place,
 And bowing meekly as you did,
 All save your shining ringlets hid,
 And then arose with such an air
 As is of peace supernal given—
 As if that brief and simple prayer
 Had bathed your very soul in heaven.
 You joined in the responses,—I
 In spirit only durst reply.
 Solemn yet cheerful, deep yet clear,
 Like blended joy and holy fear,
 Or angels song to mortal ear,
 Midst many murmurs yours I heard,
 And drank, heart deep, each holy word;
 But when the anthem woke the aisle,
 And swelled until it shook the pile,

And you, with voice of liquid tone,
 As if it flowed from music's throne,
 And carried majesty along
 Upon the rapturous waves of song,
 Gave forth the sweetness of your soul,
 Through mazes of delight to roll,
 I stood—the past and future spent—
 All, but present ravishment.

VII.

“The service o'er, you looked dismayed,
 As from a lovely vision roused,
 Or severed from a beauteous maid,
 To whom you were but just espoused :
 And this I loved—this constancy,
 Sublimer than eternity.

* * * *

* * * *

When holy meetings for the good
 Of distant continents convened,
 Above the saintliest you stood
 In speech and prayer so fully gifted,
 Above the earth so fully lifted,
 A peerless champion
 As ever won
 A combat with the fiend.

* * * *

* * * *

VIII.

“At the feast of bread and wine—
 The table of the Lord,—
 Divineness present in a sign
 Is broken and is poured,
 And lips their Maker seem to kiss—
 If aught is holy, surely this:
 No stripling angel first drew nigh

The lightning throne of the Most High,
 With more of love and loving fear,
 Or left with dizziness more dear
 Of mingled gladnesses of heart,
 Than *seemed*—ay, *SEEMED* this saintly one
 To seek the altar and depart—
 So meekly and contritely kneeling,
 Rising beatified,
 And overflowed with feeling,
 Gushing from heaven like a tide—
 Oh ! perfect, matchless seeming !
 Saw I not now with mine own eyes—
 Could I not stamp upon
 The father of these silent lies,
 I could not doubt that I am dreaming.

IX.

“ They offered me the holy bread—
 I shuddered at the very thought,
 And turned aside my guilty head,
 And wept devoutly as I ought :
 And did of many things repent,
 Albeit yet most innocent,
 A guileless, free and buoyant thing,
 With heart forever on the wing—
 Now bathed in dews of gentle sadness
 And now in rays of laughing gladness;
 Controlled by that which mocks control
 And makes the world through seasons roll :
 Beneath the ripple and the gleam,
 The steady current of the stream
 Held on forever to the main
 Of passion boundless, deep and vain.

X.

“ As sister angels feel for us,
 I loved but was not amorous.



My father—brother—both were dead;
 My mother stood not in their stead,
 For she was weak as they were strong,
 And floated with the world along—
 As fond, as easily beguiled,
 And almost timid as a child;
 On self, she never durst depend,
 But ever on the showiest friend.
 Young as I was, she clung to me,
 O'erawed by my wild energy.
 To you my heart confiding turned
 For guidance and for light,
 And freely, purely, softly burned
 Torward you as lovers
 Of some pale anchorite
 Whose presence o'er him hovers
 With gleams of angels' flight:
 I spoke my heart, my soul I spoke
 As from its depth each feeling broke,
 And harshly I was spurned.

XI.

“ My fond advance you made to mean
 A thing I could not act or tell—
 In mind or matter ne'er had seen,
 And then to me impossible.
 Young as I was, so trusting, free,
 I had not had a dream so foul,
 And though your tone was calm as death,
 I shook as at a demon's howl,
 And shrank as from his noisome breath:
 And still the wonder grew to be,
 That thoughts which monstrous seemed to me,
 To you should come so easily.

XII.

“ Then passed my conduct in review:—
 My fearless, thoughtless, girlish play,

As harmless as the breath I drew
 And gladsome as the beams of day,
 Under your kind construction grew
 A thing I sickened to survey,
 Which wrought but with designing shrewdness
 To hide a more disgusting lewdness
 Than—shudd'ring still—I could believe,
 Or any but a saint conceive.
 Had I been hardened, old or worn,
 This were a thing I might have borne,
 But as it was, each heedless word
 Struck deeply as a poisoned sword.
 I could not speak; if I had tried,
 I should have merely choked and died:
 My heart was rising to my lip,
 And ready at a word to slip,
 And if an earthquake then had burst,
 I had already felt the worst;
 And I was bidden stand aloof,
 And sent away with such reproof,
 As only saints of saintliest garb
 Can hurl at sinners like a barb,
 Then turn away with injured air,
 To leave their fangs to rattle there.

XIII

“ Astounded, stunned, entranced with woe,
 I reached my home I know not how:
 For days I did not dare to deem
 It was not all a hideous dream;
 And when at last I dared to weep
 I thought I should have died of grief;
 I seemed to fall from deep to deep
 Forever to despair
 Adown an endless steep,
 Till lay the fountain bare
 Of sighs and tears,
 And then I felt that stern relief,

The end of fears,
 Which as I rose, within me wrought
 An utter recklessness of aught:
 Mistrusting you, I doubted all,
 And stood in readiness to fall.

XIV.

“ Thy father—yes, that sainted man,
 Whose common gait was holier than
 That of a sinner on his knees
 Or others’ hidden charities—
 He brought a suit against my mother—
 He brought another and another,
 And she, bewildered with surprise,
 Saw melt away before her eyes,
 Houses, lands, tenements—as though
 They were but made of so much snow,
 That could not stand a summer sky,
 Or so much shining piety.
 Though strange the suit—unknown the claim,
 At first she durst but feebly blame,
 Until the venom of my tongue
 Her mildness into combat stung.

XV.

“ Meshed as we were, it was but left
 To be more tardily bereft;
 And though I entered into strife,
 As ’twere an element of life,
 I did but clasp the weapon’s blade,
 And still a greater triumph made,
 For saintly son and father both,
 Who got our all however loth,
 And brought one to that blessed plight
 She might have given the widow’s mite.

XVI.

"The day drew nigh which must bereave
 My mother of her last resource,
 Of home, of hope, and only leave
 Us shame, and beggary, or worse.
 It was not much for me to brave
 The world I could already scorn,
 Although the refuge of the grave
 Seemed then to me as less forlorn :
 But, oh, my mother ! she was lost
 To all that could be said or done,
 Upon the waves of anguish tossed,
 With reason waiting to be gone.
 For all she lived upon—all, all
 She knew as comfort and delight,
 She must abandon now to fall
 To something worse than endless night.
 Hopes she had cherished for my sake,
 Appeared to her so many slain :
 Though words of comfort still I spake,
 They were unheeded, idle, vain !
 Our friends were lost—if such we had—
 And no asylum yet appeared ;
 I dreamt I saw my mother mad,—
 And that she would be much I feared :
 Say she was weak—it may be so—
 So are we all—but this I know,
 Her heart was fond as heart can be,
 And full as heaven of love, and all for me.

XVII.

"I thought—resolved—I fixed my soul
 Like fate to reach a certain goal :
 I never paused—I never shook,
 But straight to that my course I took ;
 And straight to what ? a haughty thing,
 Born high in Europe's royal list,

Who o'er this land had taken wing
 To see how mortals can exist
 Without an emperor or king.
 It was a touch of my romance
 To run that wild and lofty chance,
 But had there been a mightier one,
 As straight to him I should have gone:
 So I could see and speak and hear—
 Though God himself—I did not fear—
 For I was mad—though reason ne'er
 Did calmer, firmer aspect wear
 Than I who strove to conquer fate
 By pleading with that thing of state.

XVIII.

“ A prince by birth but still a clown
 In spite of title, power and crown :
 For all the feelings he possessed
 The diamonds glittering on his breast,
 Might in a starry form of art
 Been worn by him in lieu of heart;
 Yet he for novelty had gust
 For beauty too, must princely lust;
 And graciously was pleased to praise
 The blushes raised beneath his gaze,
 The charms that crimsoned at his mirth
 As purely fresh as morning's birth
 Amid heaven's golden haze.

XIX.

“ ‘Ah—I have naught to spare’, said he,
 ‘For aught so cold as charity.
 Our charity let beggars move,
 But ladies overcome by love.
 Though I have seen the fairest fair,
 Thou’rt fairer yet that all I swear,
 And—though I have a bride of state—

Fitter to be my bosom mate ;
 Then make me more that ever blest,
 And grant a lover's last request,
 And thou shalt never know the want
 Of aught that wealth and power grant.'

XX.

" Lessoned so well in holiness,
 I might have guessed at royalty,
 But like a statue of distress—
 As poets say, a Niobe—
 There, there a weeping fool I stand
 Until he bursts the latent fire,
 Kisses my lips and clasps this hand,
 Which struck him to my feet in ire.
 Oh, rash as Satan ! there I stood,
 My fist imbrued with royal blood !

XXI.

He scrambled to his feet in wrath,
 And rushed upon me with a sword ;
 I never swerved me from his path,
 But looked him full, nor spoke, nor stirred.
 His glance met mine—he paused—looked down :
 I knew that I was monarch then,
 And never after feared his frown,
 Theugh feared it was by many men ;
 Though the contrivance was his own,
 Scarce durst he be with me alone.

XXII.

" Yet had the beast enough of spleen
 To hold his purpose faster still ;
 Perhaps had I but pliant been
 As pleasure brief had been his will ;
 In vain, when past my gust of rage,

I argued like a youthful sage ;
 I found it was but waste and folly.
 And went away most melancholy.

XXIII.

“ I wept, I stormed—what could I do ?
 For nights already had I prayed,
 And hoped and trusted on and on,
 But every morn I was betrayed,
 And still the foe the battle won :
 No help on high and none below—
 Naught but this gulf to leap into.

Still neared the time—
 Still glared the crime—
 It did not mend our case a whit
 To spurn the very thought of it.
 Still Fate his stern reversion held,
 And would not, could not be repelled.

My mother’s illness grew upon her ;
 If thence she were removed with breath,
 I feared that something worse than death ;—
 It was no time to talk of honor.

* * * * *

XXIV.

“ Man seemed then to my eyes of flame,
 From king to peasant, all the same,
 And virtue but the flower of youth
 To wither in the blaze of truth—
 The tinsel garb of idleness,
 But not a sober working dress ;
 Yet how I hated all I thought !
 And could I still have clung to aught,
 I would—I might—but God knows best,
 And knows, and only knows the rest.
 Talk not of ragings on the sea,

Of elemental mastery—
 The strife of strifes was that in me.
 I cursed mankind and lust and pelf—
 I cursed existence and myself—
 What drink the dregs ? ay, choose the worst—
 And be—forever be—accursed !

* * * *

XXV.

One hope was yet—I knew a man,
 A minister and puritan,
 Whose depth and breadth and height of mind
 Had raised him far above his kind
 Upon an intellectual throne
 Before which reason's self bowed down :
 For though a priest his soul was free
 From any taint of bigotry,
 And durst all truths of science scan
 And march with progress in the van :
 A sectary unchained,—unchecked
 By bonds or boundaries of sect,—
 Who held the scales of Justice true,
 And gave e'en rival saints their due :
 Art, nature, learning, poesy,
 The heart of vast humanity,
 Its weakness, changes, sin, excess,—
 Its hopes, fears, griefs, strength, nobleness,
 Its sweetest, brightest, keenest, sense,
 Graced his exhaustless eloquence.
 From darkest evil struck his wit
 A star-like truth where'er it hit,—
 A pungent, sparkling epigram,
 Which saved where stern reproof would damn:
 Cheering the faint in doing good,
 Feeding them with Christ's flesh and blood,
 In gracious puissance he stood
 A champion prompt at mercy's call
 To plead, pray, live or die for all.

XXVI.

“ To him I hied and almost sank
 In awe and worship at his feet;
 For what were power or wealth or rank
 To him who sat in Christ’s own seat?
 I found him gentle as the breeze
 Heaven wafts to raise the drooping flower;
 My heart which longed to burst for ease
 Poured out to him like summer shower.
 He met me as a father meets
 The sorrow of his only child,—
 Not with a gush of tender sweets
 But words of solace calm and mild.

XXVII.

“ ‘Daughter’, he said, be comforted;
 Christ hath your footsteps hither led;
 The wolves have held you long in chase;
 But every tear your eye hath shed,
 And every drop your heart hath bled
 Is wafted to the throne of grace
 As pearl or ruby finding place
 In that eternal coronet
 Which glory on your brow shall set
 To crown you victor in the race.
 I’ll seek your haughty enemy
 And conquer his hostility;
 What e’er the labor or the cost,
 Your trust in me shall not be lost:
 But let me hope that my success,—
 Which God alone can give and bless,—
 Will teach your faith with stronger wing
 To soar to heaven’s Lord and King,
 And sanctify your suffering:
 Can love that faints—can faith that scorns
 To bear the cross and tread the thorns
 Receive the prize the heavens award

The fellow martyrs of the Lord ?
 You have been tried, but have you stood
 As firmly—faithfully as should
 The child our Heavenly Father loves
 And therefore chastens and reproves ?
 Still I'll not chide—your heart is sore,
 But, daughter, go, and doubt no more,

XXVIII.

“ I went away in ecstasy,—
 The tears I shed were all delight,
 Both for the death of misery
 And birth of solace infinite:
 A life within my being woke,
 A light upon my spirit broke,
 Which flung the gates of heaven apart
 And poured its sweetness on my heart:
 Oh, what a change of will and thought—
 Oh, what a miracle was wrought
 Upon my mountain of distress
 By those few words of gentleness,
 Resistless with angelic calm,
 Which fell from that divine like balm !
 Again I was a trustful child—
 Again to Mercy reconciled ;
 For I had found a holy guide
 To whom I could my soul confide,
 Who saved it from the snares of men
 And led it up to God again.

XXIX.

“ With gratitude I was aflame
 When to my humble home he came
 With art which seemed all innocence
 O'ercoming all my diffidence,
 Drawing my inmost spirit forth
 To show its latent warmth and worth,—

And poured the riches of his mind
 Into our intercourse refined,
 Giving my soul the grandest scope,
 Filling it with the noblest hope,—
 With thoughts sublime and self respect
 To match his godlike intellect,
 Till grew my mental vision dim
 To any man or god save him.

XXX.

“ He did not dogmatize or preach,
 But as an equal treated me ;
 I seemed to catch the gift of speech,
 In our communion pure and free,
 And by his cheer and praises fired,
 I felt and spoke like one inspired.
 For my opinion and advice
 On points æsthetically nice,
 Where woman’s taste and senses fine
 The public sentiment divine,
 He watched to see my spirit stirred
 And hung upon my lightest word.
 Oh, I was in my happiest mood,
 When by his mind’s great fount I stood,
 To mark it rise and gush and flow,
 Long ere o’er spreading plains below—
 To drink its freshness ere it glads
 The thirsting, waiting myriads—
 To taste the firstlings of his pen
 Before they feed some million fellow men.

XXXI.

“ And thus those hours of gladness flew,
 And thus our souls united grew,
 E’en while we knelt together there
 To melt and blend our hearts in prayer ;
 And much he seemed with sorrow bowed

When he at last with tears avowed
 Of humankind he found in me
 Alone his true affinity.
 ‘The world,’ he said, ‘is gone astray,
 And heaven itself in disarray :
 So much confusion is in fate
 Some meet too soon and some too late :
 We know we should have met before ;
 But have we only to deplore ?
 Emerging from the blinding night,
 Should we not set its errors right ?
 However late ’tis always meet
 To break the fetters of deceit,—
 To cast the idol falsehood down
 And live to truth and love alone.
 Should we,—who feel in every line
 Traced on our minds by hand divine,—
 In all we love, in all we hate,—
 In every relish delicate,—
 In every sense and sentiment
 Of grace and virtue Heaven hath lent
 Which makes our souls so affluent,
 That we, as nature’s human span,
 Were wedded when our life began,—
 Shall we distrust—shall we deny
 What God’s own work doth testify
 A thousand ways, that you and I
 Like heat and radiance in the sun
 Were made and destined to be one ?
 What Heaven to do hath shown the will,
 Is it not righteous to fulfill ?
 Is it not impious to withstand
 The impulse given by God’s own hand ? ’ ”

XXXII.

“ The reverend sophist must have deemed
 Me duller than at first I seemed
 To give him so much pains to lift

The film which veiled his subtle drift,
For deep in love with my ideal,
I had no vision for the real,
But fond and resolute to paint
Him still the pure and perfect saint,
I clung to him by that abyss
And gave him, child-like, kiss for kiss,
While thus he murmured, ‘Love’s sweet soul
A body needs to make it whole :
Love only lives when it hath found
What it can put its arms around :
It pines to death if we still cheat
Its longing thus to be complete :
Say that it feeds on sweet and fair,
It cannot live and walk on air :
Although like angel from the skies,
Where’er love comes it purifies,
And frees from selfishness and lust,
It only sanctifies the dust
When sense all sense of flesh foregoes,
And soul in soul in sweetness flows
In organs bodily perchance,
But heedless of them as in trance ;
For though so sweet and high and good,
Love must at times have human food:
That is not day which ends at morn,
Nor child which dies ere it is born;
Nor purity which is not sure
That to the pure all things are pure;
Nor love which crossed by frost or fate,
Ne’er dares to reach its ultimate :
Still all the taint of flesh and clay
Is burned by love and heaven away ;
Like sacramental bread and wine
It grows all sacred and divine ;
In freedom must the soul advance,
Believing that the ordinance,
To kiss, to clasp and bliss awake,

From Eden comes without a break.
 Rise to the Holy Virgin's state,
 And be not half regenerate,
 But in each act immaculate !
 Let purity show no alloy
 Even in the deed and joy of joy.'

XXXIII.

" Shall I pause here or still profane
 God's speech in this satanic vein ?
 Was it not worse than sacrilege
 A maiden's heart to thus besiege
 With lust's delusive saintly fiction,
 Begun with prayer and closed with benediction ?

XXXIV.

" More ruthless are the dogs of war
 Than this grand pulpit orator :
 They seek alone the blood to spill
 And not eternally to kill :
 Not in his most triumphant hour
 Had Satan such audacious power
 To blast sweet virtue in the sight
 Of angels watching from the height,
 Who saw a saint make me his prey
 And hurled no bolt to save or slay,—
 Who saw my chastity expire,
 Not slain by lust but heaven's own fire.

XXXV.

" I know for this no parallel
 But one I saw and that I'll tell.
 * * * * *
 A bird perched on a stately tree
 With fruit of golden ripeness hung,
 And from the leaves looked forth to see

The stranger that so sweetly sung,
 Two ruby eyes, aflame and lit
 With spirit from the lowest pit,
 And yet the songster's look they set
 As if it had a seraph met :
 It could do nought but gaze and gaze,
 And grow more helpless in amaze,
 Still fluttering nearer as those eyes
 Surround themselves with rainbow dyes :
 Faintly at first the circles spread,
 Like halo round a saintly head ;
 With more intense and dazzling hue
 At last they burned in red and blue—
 In rings of crimson, gold and green
 And shooting rays of silver sheen,
 Till the poor bird, so transport tied,
 Save this strange glory, naught espied.
 The living colors winked and danced
 Until the gazer was entranced,
 Like those who look through heaven's gate
 And eagerly their turn await

To pass to bliss.

Those eyes more kindness still illumes;
 Those glories glow like angel plumes ;
 They nod, smile, beckon, almost say,
 Come into heaven while you may :

Nor longer does the trembler pause :
 Into the rainbow arch she falls :
 What sound is that my heart appals ?

A quick sharp hiss—
 A flutter—scream—A snap—
 The bird is in the serpent's trap—
 Fast in his forkéd jaws.

XXXVI.

“ The hardest blow was yet to fall ;—
 The thought that he was still sincere,
 And that he loved me more than all,

Than even God, was very dear;
But God had vengeance swift in store ;
 Too soon I found I was but one
Among a still deluded score
 My priestly lover had undone.
Oh, if I could have then gone mad,
 It would have been a blessed gain,
But Heaven for me no mercy had,
 And still I lived and still was sane ;
At least I knew in my despair
 And agony too keen and deep
To leave me fear or hope or care,
 That I was sinking down a steep,
Foul, hideous, bottomless and black,
From which a fiend might well draw back:
Down, down I sank, at every grade,
Losing the soul that God had made,
Until I grew what I am now,—
A heartless thing with shameless brow.”

THE PENITENT.

PART THIRD.

I.

As down the side of rocky steep
Dashes the stream in headlong chase,
Her speech had poured but now to weep,
She slackened its tumultuous race;
But still the current, like a river,
Flowed strong and deep and dangerous as ever.

II.

“ Once fairly plunged within the tide,
I laid all squeamishness aside,
And gave to pleasure not a half,
But all my life and soul to quaff—
Drown’d every hope and care and fear,—
Clasped rapture to my soul so near
As one they beat—
All things forbidden,
Because so dangerously dear ;
My bosom’s fullness, passion’s heat—
All treasures delicately hidden,
To most lascivious conceit
I gave and took with that good will
With which fond mother’s bless and foemen kill.

III.

“ To make the present pay the cost
Of that bright future I had lost,

I let no terror stifie
 The sweetness of a moment's time,
 Or hinder one delicious crime,
 Or leave for hell to rifle
 A bloom of form, a mental flower
 Or aught that passion might devour,
 Or empty of its honeyed store :
 But still to feed my hungry flame
 Recalled my virtue and my shame,
 And had them murdered o'er and o'er,
 And when my gust had perished quite,
 Held on to them in very spite.

IV.

“ For hell contains no greater lie
 Than human sensuality.
 Let flesh and fleshly senses bound it—
 No mockery of truth surround it—
 Standing alone, with nothing lent
 By fallacy or sentiment—
 No shifting wit, like glancing elf—
 No semblance aping Virtue's self—
 But caught, without disguise or dress,
 In all its naked hideousness—
 Then earthly worms and wallowing swine,
 And things that live on filth and slime,
 Contrasted with that which I mean,
 Would seem all holy, pure and clean ;
 And eyes undazzled by the sun,
 A second sight of that would shun
 As if it could not reach the sight
 Except on rays of poisoned light.

V.

“ I was supported by my spleen
 Against the sanctified—
 Blasted by them as I had been,

My malice never died.
 I sought the holiest of the crew,
 And crushed them all as I have you.
 Oh ! what a bliss it was to hate--
 And drag them to a harlot's fate ;
 To mark the struggle of their pride--
 Their slippery virtue sliding fast ;
 To see them stem the fatal tide,
 And sink into the snare at last ;
 To work their passion to its height,
 Then burst into a canting speech,
 As though I were a saint of light,
 Of whom the Holy Scriptures teach ;
 To taunt each with his cruelty,
 After the all I would have given,
 To hold his stern monopoly,
 And let me to the pit be driven ;
 To bid him share my misery,
 Or let me share with him his heaven ;
 But when I marked his passion cool,
 And cool his burning lust of flesh,
 Again with him to play the fool,
 And charm both into life afresh ;
 Then with wild laughter on my tongue,
 And wilder lightning in my eyes,
 And heart which like sweet cymbals sung,
 To clasp the Samson shorn,
 I stooped to even to despise--
 Then cast him from me with a scorn
 So high, so mad and so delighted,
 That like a midnight ghost it frightened
 Into the pallor of a child benighted
 The wretch forlorn.

* * * * *

VI.

“ But e'en such joy was not exempt
 From what makes pleasure pall :

Saints sank with me beneath contempt,
 And ceased to move my gall ;
 There lived but one I cared to meet,
 And he lies blasted at my feet.

VII.

“ So long as I had one to nourish,
 To love and care for and deceive,
 I let my bloom like roses flourish—
 I let my mother still believe
 I was a pure and happy thing
 As ever Heaven’s gentle wing
 Bore from the earth in purity
 Of guilelessness and infancy ;
 But when I lost her, I was lost
 In hopeless, rayless nothingness,
 And since that hour my path is crossed
 By neither gladness nor distress—
 Except that gleam which burst despair
 To see your saintship grovelling there.

VIII.

“ Tis past and now I sicken more,
 And loathe myself more utterly,
 That I am stricken to the core,
 Made nothing for a wretch like thee.
 The desert may be barrenness,
 And silent, solitary, dark —
 The rock and tempest pitiless
 To souls that tremble in the bark—
 The polar hills be cold and drear—
 But all these objects *seem* to be,
 Is feeling and reality,
 Changeless, hopeless, endless—here !

IX.

“ It haunts me ever ! might I hide
 Under a hill of vipers wreathed,

Or sink beneath a poisonous tide,
 Or into graves where death is breathed,
 It were delight for one short hour
 To 'scape beyond the tyrant power
 Which pauses not for shriek on shriek,
 But ever gnaws with vulture beak.

X

“ What lust hath made me, tongue of men
 Or angels cannot tell ;
 But sink me to earth's deepest den,
 Lend me the speech of hell,
 And I'll describe the heart's condition.
 Sick of blunted repetition—
 When every shred
 Of life is wed
 To Death, and buried far below the dead,

XI.

“ Thou knowest not who comes by night—
 Ay, night by night, to me alone—
 Invisible his form and flight,
 Except to me who am his own—
 His victim, pleasure, slave and bride—
 My brain throbs—head whirls—shadows swim—
 Still, still it is my boast and pride
 I yielded but to one save him—
 For though I hurl thee o'er the brink,
 I scorn with such as thee to sink.
 Though I am ruined—who did blast?
 Earth's peerless first—Hell's king at last?
 My tongue grows rigid, chill and weak
 To warn—of this I must not speak.

XII.

“ I had a dream and but a dream,
 The faintest promise of the dawn,

Illusive as a meteor gleam,
 As suddenly revealed and gone;
 But, while it lasted, beautiful
 As blessings rendered for a curse—
 ('The sweetest flower angel's cull
 In ranging through the universe,)
 And yet the human form it wore
 Of simple grace and manly mien,
 And as I looked and looked the more,
 Like love itself, was lovlier seen.
 His glance was like the rays of heaven
 Lighting some lonely prisoner's cell—
 His smile was sweet as pardon given
 To sinner at the gates of hell—
 Sun curls his brow a halo weaved
 In fatherly sublimity—
 Pity his mighty bosom heaved
 As fondest mother's lovingly,
 And little children came to him,
 And looked into his heavenly eyes,
 And as he blessed them somewhat dim
 Seemed the proud lustre of the skies;
 The sick, the deaf, the blind, the lame,
 The leper, lunatic and such
 Poor heirs of ills and faith as came
 Were all recovered at his touch.—
 Lovely, majestic and divine,
 Mercy and might co-equal here,
 Yet these were merely as a sign
 Of that incomparably dear—
 Of pardon rendered to the wretch
 Sunken in guilt almost to me,
 With scarce the heart a sigh to fetch,
 And steeped to lips in poverty—
 Of truth and love divinely full,
 As is the sun of light and heat—
 Mercy and grace ineffable,
 And blessings as God's kisses sweet;
 And—yes—I saw it—yes, I swear

A creature like myself I saw,
 As weak, as wicked and as fair,
 Condemned by an o'er-righteous law,
 Waiting the shower of piteous stones,
 With hair dishevelled, burning cheeks,
 And heart which like sick madness moans,
 And e'en in death a shelter seeks,
 From shame and Him to whom they drag her,
 The Son immaculate of God,
 Whose words will murder like a dagger--
 Like many deaths his judgment rod :
 But no ! Oh son of God ! had I
 A thousand lives I'd give them thee,
 Though they were pure, delighted, high,
 As mine is sunk in misery !
 He saved her from the saints I say,—
 (Oh that I only durst adore !)
 He drove them from their helpless prey,
 And bade her go and sin no more.

XIII.

“ And she escaped, but he did not—
 The saints were on his track :
 I knew that they would have his blood—
 They stretched him on the rack,
 And made him share the common lot
 Of all the mercifully good.
 But 'tis not this I most lament—
 Death which to others looks so grim,
 Was far the loveliest visitant
 Ever received on earth by him ;
 But here I hold that he is wronged,
 Than even by death more cruelly—
 Who to the sinner once belonged
 Is now become the property
 Of his old murderers—the men
 Unchanged, except in name, since then,
 The modern Scribe and Pharisee :

And we have lost him—vainly rave
 The very souls he came to save—
 Unless this creed or that they swallow,
 And slavishly its ritual follow.
 Who slew him in the flesh would fain
 His spirit starve in icy chain,---
 Let those he died for perish still,
 And both thus kill and kill and kill !

XIV.

“ The pompous panoply,
 The tithing, ritual, temple, priest,
 The vast respectability,
 And learnèd ease,
 Cold sacrament, and long-graced feast,
 The formal way and settled diction,
 The hum-drum orthodoxy---these,
 For doctrines simple, living, free,
 And purer everlastinglly---
 These, as before the crucifixion,
 These shroud the Saviour from our view,
 And make him seem as one of you,
 In ostentation which to me
 Appears a solemn mockery
 Of my own empty vanity.

XV.

“ Are all men numbered in your pack ?
 Heart hath to spirit whispered so,
 But let your soul the unction lack,
 I tell you, villain, no ! no ! no !
 Though you have done your very best,
 Though you have compassed sea and land,
 Though you have prayed so many dead,
 You have not been completely blest ;
 There still are some for whom He bled,
 Who in high places ne'er have stood ;

Who do not know that they are good—
 Who get from Him their daily bread,
 And get it only at his hand !

XVI.

“ The forms they use the heart decides,
 As does the will the body’s motion,
 And all their doctrines love prescribes,
 Which are but love and love’s devotion ;
 Those mysteries which saints condemn
 To night are clear as day to them,
 Albeit I am forced to say
 They still are construed love’s own way :
 But then such errors are a sin
 E’en angels are detected in ;
 And were they not allowed to see
 And walk by the light of charity,
 They would be backward as the blind,
 And left by saints far, far behind ;
 The more they have of righteousness,
 The less they think that they possess—
 The nearer heaven they ascend,
 The less to saintship they pretend,
 And though they more profoundly see
 And own their own iniquity,
 To others’ weakness they grow blind,
 Or if not so, exceeding kind.
 As godly praise is their distress,
 Their noblest work is valueless
 For purposes of holiness,
 And brows with laurel seldom wreathes :
 In doing good they love and woo it,
 And mightiest efforts seem to please—
 The heart and thought and will pursue it
 And make the merit of their ease
 But as the breath young Hebe breathes :
 They do and hardly know they do it.
 Faulty they are and full of woe,

Or else I should not love them so ;
 All faultless ones save One I hate,
 And shall do to the end of fate.
 As contrite as the wretch who rails
 Are they—and there resemblance fails.
 Though rich in grace, their buoyant might
 Would break beneath my spirit's plight
 And sins that beggar Mercy quite ;
 But had I known them ere I fell,
 As I do now, all had been well.

XVII.

“ But here I stand amidst a glitter
 Of luxury, and wealth, and taste,
 For millionaire or monarch fitter
 But small to what I well might waste,—
 A form, stripped as it is, and bare,
 Without a jewel or a gem—
 One which a queen to be as fair,
 Would gladly give her diadem.
 I do not boast—for such a word
 From royal lips my ears have heard :
 A queen was kneeling at my feet,
 Praying that some one might not die—
 Say, was not Beauty’s triumph sweet ?
 Oh, was not Beauty’s triumph high ?
 And so it proved that very hour—
 Or life or death was in my power.

XVIII.

“ And yet there is no form or state
 So crushed as mine and desolate :
 To ruined towers nature springs
 And o’er each rent her verdure flings ;
 O’er cities fallen flowers blow,
 And cattle feed and harvests grow ;
 O’er vessels sunken sing the waves—

The drown'd repose in coral caves—
 And lilies spring from earthly graves,
 And deserts, as the Scripture shows,
 Shall bud and blossom as the rose ;
 But I must languish to the last,
 And when the gates of death are passed,
 An endless death begin.

Few turns has Time before he must
 Resolve this beauty into dust,
 And I become a shrieking thing
 For flames to seize and torture wring.

* * * *

* * * *

So let it be—it is but just
 And equal to my sin.
 I do not fear but I can bear,
 For I am steadfast in despair :
 And be the demons wise enough,
 They soon will learn to stand aloof,
 And not against themselves engage
 My spirit's might and passion's rage,
 But let these on each other turn,
 And than the heart of hell more fiercely burn.

XIX.

“ My tale is told, my doom is cast,
 And now no more to me remains,
 Before I breathe my very last,
 Except to thank you for the pains
 Which you and yours for two have taken
 Who even were of Heaven forsaken:
 Few be my words, and quick your ear—
 For good or ill—arise ! and hear ! ”

XX.

He never rose, but lay as still
 As lost to either good or ill,

Though shudders, like the dying thrill
 Of wretches hopeless and accursed,
 Had lately answered every burst
 Of anguish, hatred, scorn and ire,
 Uttered by her like liquid fire.
 All prone, with visage turned away,
 Hands stiffly clasped, so still he lay,
 That as she looked a sudden doubt
 Fled like a fear her soul throughout:
 She paused—looked closer—nothing stirred:
 She spoke again—he never heard:
 She shook him slightly—he was cold:
 She turned his visage—to behold
 What filled her as the thunder dashes—
 A face which wore the hue of ashes!

XXI.

A gleam of hope her strength restored:
 She hurried to the gorgeous board,
 And rushed to him with water—
 She laved his temples and his wrists;
 She chaffed his feet and rigid fists,
 And all that art had taught her,
 Or in her past as help availed,
 She tried and tried and never quailed
 Till she had failed and failed and failed—
 Her perfumed waters and her scents,
 Seemed damn'd by Heaven to her intents—
 All she had done was done in vain,—
 And he could never live again.

XXII.

“ I thought I knew the worst distress,
 But now I am a murderer !
 I did not care to live before—
 I will not live a moment more.
 In life and death our fates are crossed,

For him I loved and hated most—
 Sighed first for him and latest sigh,
 And now upon his bosom die.”

XXIII.

It long had been her fatal notion
 To keep a poison in a cup ;
 From secret place she reached the potion,
 With desperate hand and drank it up.
 She scarce her victim’s side could gain
 To sink—to clasp—with mute caress—
 The poison mounted to her brain
 And robbed her of all consciousness.

* * * * *

Awhile she had oblivious lain,
 When, lo ! she seemed to live again,
 And in her ear a voice resounded
 To which her heart of hearts rebounded,
 She knew it well—it breathed her name :
 She rose and looked—it was the same—
 The glory of her brightest dream :
 She scarce forebore a joyous scream,
 And on her knees her form she flung,
 And to His feet with kisses clung—
 As Magdalene clung of yore,—
 She smothered with her golden curls—
 Drowned with her eyelids’ liquid pearls
 The holiest feet that earth ere bore,—
 Until the gracious figure stooped,
 And raised her like a flower that drooped.
 But what He said no pen can write—
 Wisdom and sweetness interwove,
 Each word was as the birth of light
 And fonder than the heart of love ;
 And she was melted like a wave,
 And heart and spirit to Him gave—
 All, all her inmost soul resigned,
 And there His Holy Ghost enshrined !

XXIV.

From her unto the corse He went,
 And by its listless hand He took it ;
 Then life through every vein was sent,
 And all its ashiness forsook it ;
 And at His word it stood erect,
 Fuller of freshness than of old,
 As Adam in God's likeness decked,
 Just bursting from his Maker's mould :
 It gazed at Him and her who knelt
 In sweet and speechless ecstasy,
 And though it thought it saw and felt,
 Yet doubted all most dreamily :
 But what was this to that surprise,
 When both beheld their God arise
 Through air and roof, and stars and skies,
 Till far beyond the realms of space !
 The two left standing face to face,
 Saw all its wonted look resume
 Within that almost hallowed room :
 Both long a holy silence kept
 While gratitude and gladness wept ;
 They felt to live a sacred dread,
 For both were risen from the dead.

XXV.

She wakes !—alas ! 'twas phantasy—
 A feverish dream with hope at play—
 For standing by her side are three,
 And earthly as herself are they :
 It fills their souls with glad surprise
 To see her ope her azure eyes,
 Although it is a doubtful gain
 To come back to this world of pain,
 And she surveys them with a look
 Which shows she scarce that cheat can brook :
 But angrier still would be her glance

Had she o'erheard the priest advance
 These comments on her death-like trance :—
 “ Like marble image in old Rome,
 Of angel winging courts on high,
 Her spirit risen to bliss and home
 Left beauty too divine to die:
 Oh, she is blest if she hath rest,
 For here she nursed a dismal guest,
 And hugged the horror to her breast
 That nightly she was forced to sleep
 With the archangel of the deep.
 Mere madness all! and falser still
 The dream that I e'er wrought her ill.
 If Satan were all innocent
 As I am, even of intent
 To soil her chasteness, then should grace
 Restore him to his primal place :
 And I believe, as I confide
 In Him who for the contrite died,
 That she is pure as heavenly light,
 Or those who walk with God in white.
 Not Job himself was ever tried,
 Nor e'en by Satan so belied
 As I by those whom I but live
 To aid and save and blessing give.
 It is my cross that such as she
 Are slaves to guileless phantasy,
 Which in the salient freaks it takes
 Me first a god and then the devil makes.”

XXVI.

He stopped to weep.—When back had flown
 Her soul from dreamland, in a tone
 As gentle as a turtle’s moan,—
 Grasping what held the antidote
 With timely skill forced down her throat,—
 Upbraiding her with her essay
 To steal earth’s loveliest flower away—

" Peace ! peace !" he said. " The night shall pass,
 And joy come with the morning,
 As after storm the tender grass
 Springs up for earth's adorning.

Thy wrongs, thy griefs my eyes still wet :
 Is there no balm in Gilead yet ?
 Alone the trusting, erring feet
 Reach Love and Mercy's judgment seat :
 Thou hast thy guilt, thy cross to bear ;
 And such alone are Jesus' care.
 He deigns to call the church his bride,
 With scarlet sins so deeply dyed :
 Repent ! return ! let mercy's flow
 Wash all my sins as white as snow.

Nor longer be thy walk
 On red hot plough shares, searing clay ;
 Nor longer be thy talk
 A section of the judgment day.

* * * *

* * * *

Here waits a youth whose hope of bliss
 Is but to wed and make you his :
 You know him noble, brave and pure—
 His love and constancy so sure
 That both will unto death endure---
 Then make your mutual happiness secure"---

XXVII.

While at its full and oiliest run,
 Before its end, the speech was done;
 For prophet of antiquity,
 When tempted by the evil one,
 Ne'er spurned a smooth iniquity
 With half the quick and scornful force
 With which she cast aside
 In her supernal pride
 The honeyed tempting of this bland discourse.
 Like an offended queen she said

“ I am no vampire; and to wed
 Or let this living corse be fed
 Upon a life fresh, true and brave,
 To cheat awhile the yawning grave,
 I scorn---as I should scorn to be
 The hypocrite who ruined me.
 Break but the lily film which hides
 The wreck of sin and passion’s tides,
 And you shall find each blasted sense
 As deadly as a pestilence---
 A breast where lurk a thousand asps,
 He pines who locks---he dies who clasps.

XXVIII.

“ You calmly ask me to return
 To my first purity of soul,
 As if the past I could unlearn
 Or make life’s moments backward roll ;
 The waters creeping o’er the ooze,
 Foul with decay and reptile slime
 Glide onward for they cannot choose,
 Back to their fountain head to climb ;
 Like them I must in horror flow,
 Hating the channel for me cast,
 And lower sink and blacker grow,
 Till lost in ocean—death—at last.

XXIX.

“ There grows but in terrestrial fields
 A joy for which the angels sigh,
 Which richer fruit immortal yields
 Than all the services on high—
 A wedlock of the heart and hand,—
 Pure as Spring’s sun-beams and as warm
 With life and love’s creative tide ;
 In calm and more in darkest storm,
 A bliss and comfort sanctified.

Oh, what a world woos its command,
 In which all good and grace may grow,
 And sweet affection's flowers blow,
 And manliness its grandeur show
 In power to guide, protect and bless
 With wealth of sacred tenderness
 From love's pure fountain fathomless !

* * * * *

You ask me to become a bride—

You seek with mine a life to blend,
 As if my beauty did not hide
 A leprosy death cannot end :
 The glance which o'er my spirit flies
 To see if love may yet alight
 Where some green spot of freshness lies
 Amid sin's universal blight,
 Still finds alone in that dead sea
 Mooring for hate, remorse and misery.

XXX.

"I shall not curse thee, preacher mine,
 Nor brand thee—'whited sepulchre,'
 Thou image of my spirit's shrine
 Which fell and crushed its worshipper :
 Mine is the victim's crime and fate ;
 My heart hath bled and e'er must bleed ;
 But still I would not change my state
 With any model of thy creed.
 That creed most tenderly hath cared
 For souls by sin and sorrow rent,
 And specially a place prepared
 For their eternal punishment :
 However dire that home may prove,—
 Whate'er its fiery tortures be,
 I choose it myriad times above
 Thy heaven of hypocrisy.
 Thy heart so soft would fain adore

Old doctrine much but mercy more :
 If I my soul in hate immerse,
 'Tis not at thee I dart my curse,
 But at thy system, creed and cloth
 Which made us fools and victims both.

* * * * *

XXXI.

"Bind me in adamantine chains,
 Drown me in seas of sulphur blue,
 Then ask thy soul what hell remains
 For thee a thousand times more due.
 Weeping as usual ! I have fears
 That even should'st thou death desire,
 Hell would not have thee, lest thy tears
 Should quench its everlasting fires.
 Thou art the victim of thy faith,
 And I, alas ! of faith in thee :
 Thou still art bound in living death,
 But I again am frank and free.
 I pity thee and scorn the creed
 To which thou art enslaved and wed ;
 Thou canst not cramp thy sensual need
 Into that strait Procrustean bed :
 Yet that 'tis heaven there to be
 Thou preachest with thy potent art,
 While still thou writh'st in agony,
 And giv'st the lie to thine own heart ;
 What lower hell than thine is known ?
 What viler deep for crime and pelf ?
 Still staunch is Satan to his own—
 Thou false to all—e'en to thyself :
 A scorpion swarm thy bosom stings,
 Yet thou dost smile and preach and pray ;
 Of hypocrites the king of kings,
 What force can break thy pious sway ?

XXXII.

“ As model of their sanctity
 And of their secret love of sin,
 Thou hast to holy hearts the key,
 And victory must ever win :
 But yet beware of him whose aim
 To hurl thee from thy lofty seat
 Is fixed to win immortal fame,
 For he is equal to the feat,
 He watches, plots and lies in wait,
 And makes his yielding wife his bait :
 Although from many frailties free,
 Thou mak’st a poor St. Anthony,
 And what must come I can foresee :
 A storm is rising, and the shock
 Will shake thy church upon its rock,
 Fill every pious mind with gloom,
 And scandalize all christendom.

XXXIII.

“ Yet why shouldst thou the issue fear ?
 The sympathy of all is thine ;
 Of every saintly sinner here
 Thou art the pioneer divine ;
 If into heaven thou findest way,
 There is good hope for such as they :
 And they believe thou canst not fail
 But with St. Peter wilt prevail ;
 For did they not thy ready wit
 Against a mighty nation pit
 To singly beard as thou didst then
 The British Lion in his den,
 And tame the monster’s rampant will
 To fawn where he had roared to kill ?
 And if St. Peter prove averse,
 In his old mood to swear and curse,
 Thy wit and humor may assuage

And turn his apostolic rage
 Into a gracious disposition
 To give all thine a free admission.

XXXIV.

“ And when the ordeal comes at last,
 And scandal clouds burst on thy head,
 Thy enemies who seek to blast,
 Will suffer ruin in thy stead,
 For all thy saints will testify,
 The envious charges false to prove,
 And show how vile conspiracy
 Was fostered by thy boundless love.
 And should thy counsel, wise indeed,
 But scorn all tricks and alibi,
 And let thee with the jury plead
 With moving tones and tearful eye,
 I would not answer for a soul
 In jury box, or bench, or bar,
 Though in the plaintiff’s counsel roll,
 Who listened to the melting war
 Of wit and sadness in thy style
 With which thou didst my honor woo,
 And e’er this nation’s heart beguile,
 And haughty dame Britannia’s, too.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Lo ! half mankind with scandal fed
 Devour it as their daily bread ;
 And as the Roman circus joyed
 To see the bravest forms destroyed,
 Light sparkles here from countless eyes,
 As each great reputation dies !—

The vision rises
 With quick surprises:
 The devil fails not aid to bring,—
 Two witnesses opposed to thee,
 Whose idiot lies make the whole thing,

From first to last, seem perjury.
 I see thy foes do but prepare
 Fresh glories for thy peerless star,—
 That in thy sin the hosts that share
 Will honor thy triumphal car—
 Ay, draw it with a wild acclaim,
 And rend the heaven's with thy name,
 Thou prophet, racy of the sod,
 América's high priest and demigod !

XXXV.

“ Go on in triumph ! I have done
 With all the vanity of life ;
 For were earth's queenship to be won,
 I have no spirit for the strife.
 I go—but go alone—where Death
 Shrinks from his loathsome bride Disease,
 Who leaves her victims only breath
 For pains and groans and lack of ease.
 With them I'll spend my life and health
 Unto the last of their amount,
 And add my skill, strength, youth and health
 To swell the pitiful account ;—
 A fraction but however small,
 Yet some relief to human ill;
 To show I still deplore my fall,
 And have for good at least the will ;
 And when amid the sick and crazed,
 I sink with weariness and woe,
 Heart-faint, despairing and amazed
 At my small helpfulness below,
 I'll think of thee—raised over all,
 A moral sun to soul and sense,
 With honeyed tongue and heart of gall,
 Diffusing life in eloquence,—
 Adored by millions as a saint,
 While consciously a pious lie,
 And using virtues as a paint

To hide thy arch-hypocrisy ;
 I'll pity thee and thy remorse
 More than the lazars I shall nurse,
 Content to be the thing I am,
 A wretch indeed, but not a sham !

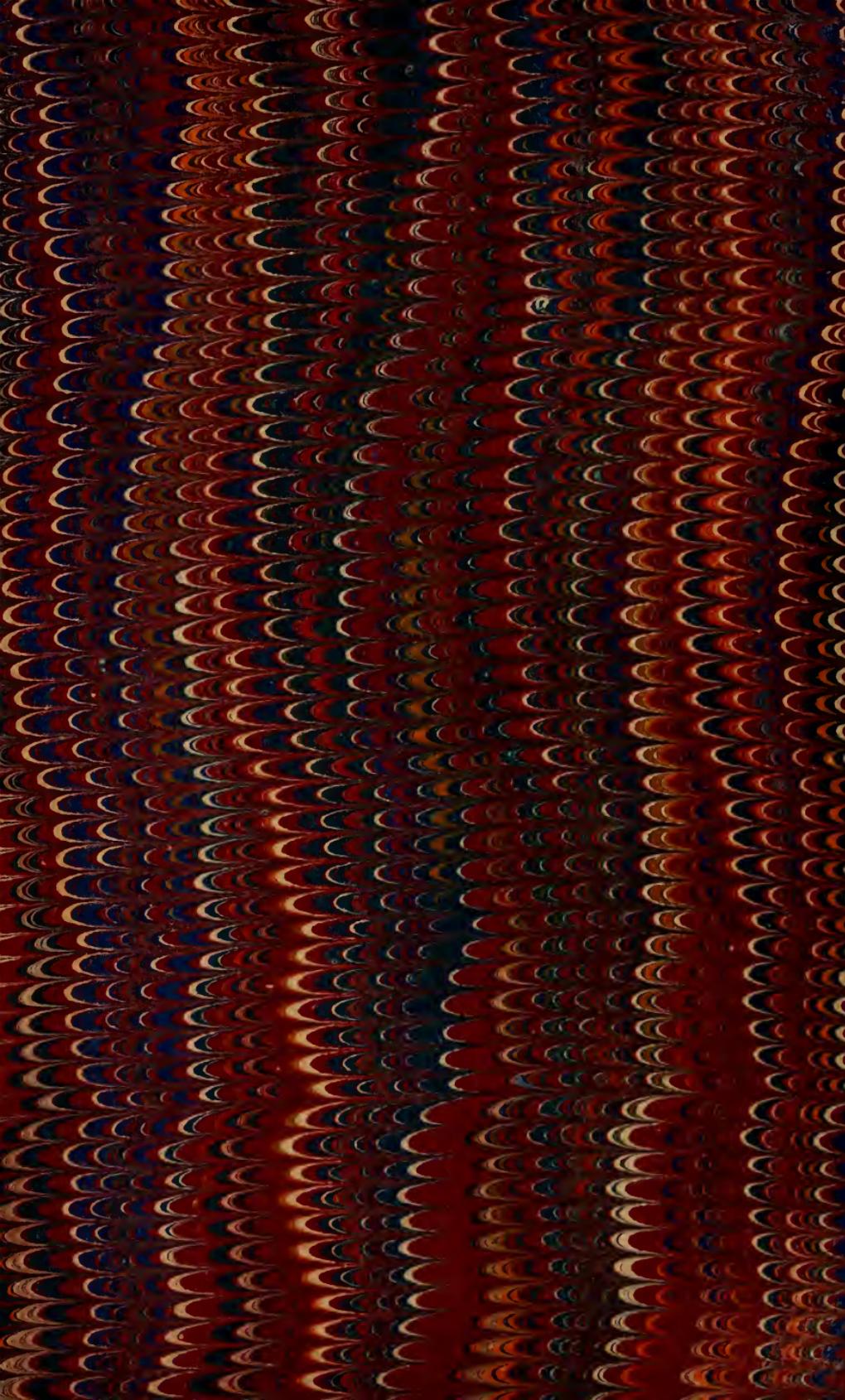
* * * *

“ Farewell ! ” she cried, “ We meet no more ! ”
 And vanished through a secret door.

XXXVI.

She vanished and no more was seen
 By those who knew what she had been :
 Her riches changed in form by sale,
 Left not a vestige of the trail
 Of that wild star whose lustre lent
 Strange beauty to our firmament,
 Like light from heaven's highest steep,
 And dangerous sparkling from the deep,
 Blent in a charm, ne'er felt before,
 And vanished now for evermore.





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